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From Pres. Angell
May 11 03

The Utility of an Academic Education for Young Men who have to Earn their Own Living and who Expect to Pursue a Commercial Life

An Investigation

By
R. T. Crane.

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From Pres. Angell
May 11, '03
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The Utility of an ACADEMIC EDUCATION for Young Men who have to Earn their Own Living and who Expect to Pursue a COMMERCIAL LIFE

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An Investigation

By Richard T. Crane

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From Pres. Angell
May 11 '03

From Pres. Angell
May 11, 03
Orig. Sources
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THE UTILITY OF AN ACADEMIC EDUCATION FOR YOUNG MEN WHO HAVE TO EARN THEIR OWN LIVING AND WHO EXPECT TO PURSUE A COMMERCIAL LIFE.

¶ *The Statement of the Case.*

THE question whether an academic, or even a high-school course, is of benefit to young men who have to make their own way in the business world and intend entering upon a commercial life, is one of such vital importance and is surrounded by so much doubt that it is high time it was thoroughly investigated, for, if the facts are as many believe, these institutions are a most stupendous mistake, if not a positive injury to this class of young men.

A great deal has been written on this subject, but, so far as I have been able to discover, the writers have given merely their opinions or theories, not facts.

It has seemed to me that the statements of the actual experience of a large number of prominent business men, of heads of universities, and of college graduates themselves, would be of great assistance in arriving at something tangible on this subject. I have, therefore, made quite an extensive investigation along this line, the results of which are herein given, together with certain comments.

It should be borne in mind that wherever college education is mentioned herein, it refers exclusively to an *academic* course, as indicated by the title of this article.

First will be found a copy of a letter sent to the presidents of nineteen of the principal universities and colleges in this country, and the replies from all who answered, which will show how much light they are able to give on this subject.

¶ *A Copy of the Letter Sent to the College Presidents.*

September 5, 1901.

Dear Sir:

The question of the utility of an academic course, for young men who have to make their own living and who expect to pursue a commercial life, is one of the greatest importance, and as I am endeavoring to ascertain what the facts are in this matter, I should be very glad, indeed, if you would kindly favor me with an answer to the enclosed questions.

Thanking you in advance for your attention to this matter, I am,

Yours truly,

R. T. CRANE.

¶ *The Questions Asked.*

1. Is there, in your opinion, any evidence that such education is of any advantage to this class of young men?
2. If so, what evidence?
3. Have you made any systematic effort to ascertain:
   - [*a*] What success such college graduates have met with in securing positions?
   - [*b*] How successful they have been after going into business?
4. If question No. 3 is answered affirmatively, what have you found to be the facts?

5. Can you mention any employers who, when seeking employes, are in the habit of asking, from the head of any college, information regarding students about to graduate, with the view of selecting their help from among such students?
6. Please give an estimate of how much it costs your college to give a young man such a course of education. I do not mean by this simply the student's tuition, but you should also include interest on the plant, taxes, insurance, wear and tear, in fact everything that enters into the actual cost of running the college.
7. Can you give me the names and addresses of the secretaries of classes that were graduated from your college five to eight years ago? I may wish to obtain from them a list of their classmates, in order to make some inquiries of such young men, should the information received from the heads of the colleges be unsatisfactory.

THE OPINION OF COLLEGE PRESIDENTS.

Six of the universities did not reply, *viz.:*

Cornell University.
Washington University, St. Louis.
University of Pennsylvania.
University of Wisconsin.
University of Minnesota.
University of Rochester.

The replies received from the others I give complete, with the exception of their answers to questions Nos. 6 and 7.

The reason for omitting No. 6 will be found elsewhere. Question No. 7, of course, is of no interest to this article.

FROM CHARLES W. ELIOT,

President of Harvard University.

The question of the utility of an academic course for young men who are going into business can not be intelligently discussed unless the term "academic course" be clearly defined. I understand it to comprehend any course of study in a college or scientific school which covers approximately the years from seventeen or eighteen to twenty or twenty-two. With this understanding of the term, there can be no question whatever that an academic course is in the highest degree desirable for capable young men who mean to make their living in business. By business I understand banking, transportation, manufacturing, mining, large scale farming, and engineering in all its branches. These occupations require nowadays, in all their higher levels, a trained mind, and a deal of appropriate information. This training and information can only be acquired in colleges and scientific schools. A young man who is going into business had better take an academic course, in my sense of the term, if he has any mind to train. That is an indisputable proposition, and there is no use in discussing it.

To get detailed evidence of the truth of these statements, I should advise you to procure a series of the Triennial or Quinquennial Class Reports, which are published by the Class Secretaries at Har-

vard, and I suppose at other colleges. These reports give the occupations and mode of life of the members of a class, and even of persons who have been temporarily connected with the class.

By a careful examination of a series of these Reports you will get abundant evidence that college and scientific school training nowadays is profitable, indeed, indispensable to a young man going into the higher walks of business. To procure such a series from Harvard you had better apply to Mr. Jerome D. Greene, President's Secretary, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

FROM ARTHUR T. HADLEY,

President of Yale University.

We regard college education as of great advantage to the business man, as well as the professional man. This is not, however, because it enables him to make more money, but to have more influence and enjoyment with the same amount of money. It is this broader general object which distinguishes the college course from the purely technological one.

The evidence is found in the actual position held by our graduates in the various cities in which they live. One of my most important objects in meeting the alumni associations throughout the country was to obtain a thorough basis of judgment on this point. It is obvious, however, that the facts concerning this kind of success are not readily capable of tabulation.

No systematic effort has been made to compare the success of our graduates in securing positions with the success of any similar body of men who had not been to college.

We prefer not to publish list of employers who are in the habit of consulting us.

Regretting the absence of more detailed information, I remain,

FROM FRANCIS L. PATTON,
President of Princeton University.

In reply to your letter of September 5th, I can only say that I believe that those who can afford to obtain a university education should do so no matter what their career is to be. I believe that those who intend to enter commercial life will not regret the years they may have spent in obtaining college education. But I can not answer the specific questions which you present to me, and I have no specific data to give you in reference to the subject.

FROM NICHOLAS MURRY BUTLER,
Acting President of Columbia University.

I find myself unable to answer the questions contained in your circular letter of September 5th in detail, but may say that we have here abundant evidence that students who make good use of their opportunities, while undergraduates in college, are eagerly sought for in business positions. The man who does not make good use of his opportunities in college is in the same position as one who has neglected his opportunities elsewhere.

FROM G. STANLEY HALL,
President of Clark University.

I have too little detailed knowledge to answer your questions, and have made no systematic effort to ascertain such as your third question calls for. In

general, my opinion is that the utility of an academic career for business purposes depends largely upon what kind of an academic course is taken. On such a scale I fancy the old classical course would mark very low, and some of the modern technical and commercial courses and many of those in the sciences would mark very high. In these days of the elective system, an "academic course" has so wide a range of meaning as to be too indefinite to make results of much value, unless they are taken account of.

FROM JAMES B. ANGELL,
President of the University of Michigan.

In answer to your inquiry about the utility of an academic course for young men who expect to pursue a commercial life, I beg leave to say that we have never undertaken to gather any statistics on this point. We know that a good many of our graduates are successful business men. Our general belief about the matter is simply this: That the more a man's intellectual powers are developed, the more capacity he has for any undertaking in life which calls for such powers. In other words, the more of a man one is, the more successful will he be in any worthy enterprise. I have heard business men say that although it seemed that the time spent in college compelled the graduate to start lower down the scale at the age say of twenty-one than a young man who had entered as a clerk say at sixteen, yet that the former often showed so much capacity for comprehending new conditions and responsibilities that in the course of a few years he passed the other. I suppose this would not always be true. Much depends upon the personality in either case.

FROM A. S. DRAPER,
President of the University of Illinois.

I am in receipt of your favor of September 5th. The subject to which your questions refer is one which, it seems to me, can not be adequately treated in the way you have adopted. I have no doubt that college training is of substantial value to men engaging in business life. I think the proofs of it are to be found without difficulty, and there are numerous evidences of it coming in one way and another to the officers of this University. At the same time these proofs and evidences can not be presented in form in answer to categorical questions, and, moreover, it would take some time and investigation to bring them together for presentation in any form. I should be very glad, indeed, to attempt the task when leisure would permit, if there seems to be any general demand for it, but under the circumstances in which I find myself at present I can not attempt it.

Regretting that I am unable to render you a more substantial service just now, I am,

FROM WILLIAM R. HARPER,
President of the University of Chicago.

Your letter of September 5th was duly received, and I beg to submit answers to the questions of your accompanying circular:

1. My opinion is that a college education is of decided advantage to young men who propose to enter business. This opinion finds a reflection in the College of Commerce and Administration, which the University of Chicago has established, a circular of which I send you under separate cover. My opinion is founded upon the theory that a trained mind

anywhere is able to do better work than an untrained mind, and while, under certain circumstances, one who is working his way upward in a business from the lower positions may have a practical knowledge not at first possessed by the college graduate, yet, in the long run, at times when critical judgment and prompt decision is required, the one who has the broader outlook in an educational way ought to prove the more valuable.

2. The evidence in support of this opinion can not, perhaps, be presented specifically, but again and again students have come to the University to get additional training just because they have found that it was possible, in practical experience, for them to advance only so far. A number of cases occur to me in which very able men have given up business positions which paid them well, because of the observation that those who had had better educations were advancing more rapidly and were able to command better salaries.

3. No systematic effort has been made by the University to ascertain what success college graduates have met with in securing positions, or how successfully they have filled them after getting into business, but from my knowledge of the alumni of the University of Chicago, and of other institutions with which I have been connected, my opinion is that while at the start there has been some disappointment in the realization of ambitions, yet in the main, college graduates who have entered business have been as successful as could be expected.

4. N. W. Harris & Co., of this city, have made inquiry at the University of Chicago for the names of any students about to graduate who desire to enter business, and we have been able to refer to

them a number of excellent men who were accepted by them on our recommendation, and who now are either employed by them or have been advanced to better positions because of the excellence of work done with them.

Swift & Co. of this city have employed a large number of graduates of the University of Chicago, and students not graduates, who have been commended to them by the University authorities. Letters of inquiry of a similar nature are received frequently from other business houses, these two mentioned being perhaps notable.

FROM BENJAMIN I. WHEELER,
President of the University of California.

It is difficult to answer your letter of the 5th inst., because it is uncertain what you mean by "academic course." Within our academic course is included, for instance, work in mining, electricity, mechanics, etc. We put these studies on the same level with the humanistic studies leading to the degree of B. A.

I think there is evidence that an education in commercial branches or in engineering is serviceable for young men about to enter a commercial life. I think there is lack of evidence on the subject of the more general course of study, with the presumption against it.

In addition to the letter above quoted, he replies in the negative to the question whether he has made any systematic effort to ascertain what success college graduates have met with in securing positions, and how successful they have been after going into business.

The answers from the next four gentlemen are quoted as given on the inquiry sheet sent them.

FROM GEORGE MACLEAN.

President of the University of Iowa.

In reply to the question whether, in his opinion, there is any evidence that such education is of advantage to this class of young men, he says: "Decidedly Yes."

To the request for evidence upon this point, he answers: "Statistics of 'Who's Who,' articles by President Thwing, and observation in my circle of acquaintances."

He states that no systematic effort has been made to ascertain what success such college graduates have met with in securing positions, or how successful they have been after going into business.

In answer to the question whether he could name any employers who, when seeking employes, are in the habit of applying to colleges, he says: "Applications not infrequent."

FROM EDWARD H. GRIFFIN,

Dean of the College Faculty of Johns Hopkins University.

President Ira Remsen of the Johns Hopkins University stated that as he had just assumed office and had had no experience that would help him to answer the questions, he had referred the inquiry to Edward H. Griffin, Dean of the College Faculty. This gentleman replied as below:

To the question whether there is, in his opinion, any evidence that such education is of any advantage to this class of young men, he answers: "Yes," the evidence being, as he states: "The successful careers of the vast majority of college graduates."

In reply to the question whether he has made any systematic effort to ascertain what success such college graduates have met with in securing positions, and how successful they have been after going into business, he says: "I have made no such effort, but have followed the subsequent lives of most of my students and have been struck with the small percentage of failures."

The question whether he can mention any employers who apply to colleges when seeking help, he answers in the negative.

FROM E. BENJAMIN ANDREWS,
Chancellor of the University of Nebraska.

He replies "yes" to the question whether, in his opinion, such education is of any advantage to this class of young men, and in response to the request for this evidence, he says: "They get higher positions, as a rule. This is not the highest advantage. The highest advantage is that they have an inner life of enjoyment in reading, thinking, and understanding things."

Replying to the question whether he has made any systematic effort to ascertain what success such college men have met with in securing positions, he says: "No effort is needed to one in my business; the facts are obvious."

As to how successful they have been after going into business, he replies: "In the main, highly so." He further remarks: "Take a period of twenty or thirty years after graduation, and the well educated get and keep positions far more securely and regularly than others of the same ages."

To the question whether he could mention any employers who are in the habit of applying to

colleges when in need of help, he answers: "Yes, I could name a considerable number."

FROM DAVID STARR JORDAN,
President of the Leland Stanford, Jr., University.

In answer to the question whether, in his opinion, there is any evidence that such education is of any advantage to this class of young men, he says: "Such an education is of daily advantage to any man of brains and character."

When asked for evidence on this point, he replies: "It gives not always better wages, but a broader horizon, a more refined taste, a saner judgment, and a higher range of friends."

Answering the question whether he had made any systematic effort to ascertain the success such college graduates have met with in securing positions, and how successful they have been after going into business, he says: "Everyone in any field finds a place as good as he is fit for, experience being also considered. I keep pretty close watch of our own graduates and know of no failures, but our graduates are too young to show many notable cases; the first class was graduated in 1895."

In reply to the question whether he can mention any employers who are in the habit of applying to colleges when in need of help, he says: "Employers desiring engineers or teachers frequently make such applications."

¶ *What the Replies Show.*

President Wheeler of the University of California and President Hall of Clark University are the only ones who are frank enough to admit that the

presumption is against the utility of an academic course for business men.

The others all appear to be positive that such education is of benefit to men in commercial life, but when asked for evidence to support this claim, few have attempted to furnish it, and such information as these few have offered is found, upon investigation, to amount to nothing.

I leave it to the public to judge whether the heads of these institutions have the proper appreciation of the importance of making accurate statements on this subject.

There is nothing in their letters to show that they have made a systematic effort to ascertain the true condition of the question; in fact, it is doubtful whether they have made any effort at all in this direction.

It certainly would not do for a business man to conduct his affairs in this way. He must at all times be in a position to defend the quality of the goods he produces, and if he makes false statements about them, he very soon finds that it has a disastrous effect on his business.

The Opinion of College Graduates.

Next will be found a copy of an inquiry sent to the members of classes that were graduated about six years ago from the following institutions:

Yale University.
Harvard University.
Cornell University.
Columbia University.
Princeton University.
University of Pennsylvania.
University of Rochester.
University of Chicago.
University of Illinois.
University of Iowa.
University of Minnesota.
University of Wisconsin.
University of Nebraska.
University of California.

¶ *A Copy of the Letter Sent to the College Graduates.*

The Utility of an Academic Education for Young Men Who Have to Earn Their Own Living, and Who Expect to Pursue a Commercial Life.

Dear Sir:

In connection with a paper that I am preparing upon this subject, I am desirous of obtaining from college graduates some definite information regarding the points mentioned on enclosed sheet.

Those whom I particularly wish to hear from are the graduates who entered upon a commercial career and were obliged to start out to make their own way in the world without the influence of either family or friends—in other words, without what is commonly called a "Pull."

Not knowing the conditions that have surrounded the various members of your class in college, I am sending this letter to each of them.

Of course, if you do not come under the list above referred to, your answers to these questions are not desired, but in that event I should be very glad if you would advise me of such fact.

The subject I am investigating is one of so much interest and importance that I sincerely hope all to whom this letter applies will assist in this effort to arrive at a solution of the matter by furnishing the desired information.

Thanking you in advance for your kind attention to this request, I am, Yours truly,

R. T. CRANE.

¶ *The Questions Asked.*

1. When did you leave college?
2. When did you first take a position after leaving college?

3. How many positions have you held?
4. Length of time in each position?
5. What was the nature of your work in the various positions?
6. Salary received in first position?
7. Present salary?
8. Was your college education of any advantage to you in obtaining a situation?
9. Has it been of benefit to you in the performance of your duties and in securing advancement?
10. What, in your opinion, would have been your position to-day, as compared with the place you now hold, had you, instead of going to college, started at that time in a position similar to the one you did obtain after leaving college?
11. If you had your life to live over, would you take a college course in preference to starting in business that much earlier?

¶ *The Replies and Certain Deductions.*

Total number of letters sent to college graduates,	*1593*
Letters returned undelivered,	*129*
Answers received,	*555*
Number not replying,	*909*

Of the 555 answers received, 490 were from students who have either taken up a professional or technical line of work, or who state that they do not come within the scope of this investigation.

This leaves only sixty-five letters from the class of young men whom I particularly desired to reach, which is so small a proportion of the whole that the information furnished by them does not throw much light upon the subject.

I will, however, tabulate their replies so that the public may see what they have to say.

In regard to the question concerning their present income, fourteen do not answer at all and twenty state that they are in business for themselves. The replies from the remaining thirty-one show that nearly all are doing very well on this score.

The question whether a college education has been of benefit to them, in the performance of their duties and in securing advancement, is answered in the affirmative by fifty, and in the negative, by seven. The others give no information upon this point.

To the question whether their college education was of any advantage to them in obtaining a situation, thirty-two answer "yes," and twenty-seven "no." The remainder either state that they do not know or make no reply whatever.

In answer to the question—what, in their opinion, would have been their position to-day, as compared with the place they now hold, had they, instead of going to college, started at that time in a position similar to the one they did obtain after leaving college; twenty-seven believe it would have been inferior, fourteen that it would have been better, and thirteen that it would have been about the same.

Sixty out of the sixty-five say that, if they had their lives to live over, they would take a college course, for even those who admit that they would be better off financially if they had not gone to college, claim that whatever they lose in this respect, is more than compensated for by the college experience and the increased capacity which it has given them for enjoying life.

An extreme instance of this is seen in the case of one of these young men who states that upon leaving

college he had neither pull nor capital; that he thinks his college experience was of no material or direct benefit to him in securing a position; that he finally drifted into the cattle business out West, in which he was unsuccessful, and that he is now out of a position.

Notwithstanding all this, and admitting, as he does, that had he continued in business instead of going to college, his financial condition, undoubtedly, would have been better than it is to-day, he says:

"I think I am safe in saying that if I had the decision to make over again I should again take the college education. It may not make great returns on the investment, in actual money, but to the man who has the taste and determination it makes, I feel, adequate returns in the enlarged field he is given for the pursuits of his life with happiness to himself, and with some benefit to those about him."

In further illustration of this feeling, I refer to a letter from a young man who has gone into the banking business, and whose statements are also quoted elsewhere in connection with another branch of the subject.

While he frankly acknowledges that his college education does not compensate for the lack of practical training, and that, so far as his business is concerned, he would be better off if he had remained at home, still, he says, that if he had his life to live over again he would certainly go to college, as: "The satisfaction of a broader life makes up for financial loss."

Several of the students state that they really found a strong feeling against college graduates, and were actually at a disadvantage on that account. As one of them remarks, "The man who has been trained to

do certain work, says: 'will you hire me? I can do this.' College graduates can only ask for a chance to try to do it." * * "Judging from my own experience, a graduate of college who should try to make his way in the world in commercial life, absolutely without influence of family or friends, would stand a poor chance in competition with the young man of equal age who had received a thorough business training."

Another, who upon leaving college, took up newspaper work and is now proprietor of a paper, says: "I belong most decidedly to the class you mention. In entering upon my business life, after completing my course, I found a strong feeling against the 'College Graduate.' I was actually at a disadvantage due to this prejudice. I have always guarded against any reference to my college work when in business circles, feeling that it was the discretion that is 'the better part of valor.' Of course, I am persuaded the drill at college has enabled me to make progress and enjoy to-day a broader life than would have been possible without it."

¶

As an example of the conflicting opinions held by men in the same line of business, with regard to the benefits of a college education in a commercial life, I quote from letters received from two students who are now engaged in banking.

The first upon leaving college became connected with a bank which his father (who received only a common school education) had already built up into a successful concern. This young man says:

"Whatever success I may have received, I attribute entirely to my course at college, where I learned

to judge human nature in a way I could never have acquired elsewhere; also the methods used to learn the college lessons, I have been able to apply to other things and arrive at a rapid and accurate conclusion. I was also taught self-reliance, and to stick to a thing until it was accomplished."

His opinion of what his position would be to-day, had he started in business at the time he entered college, is expressed as follows:

"I would have been an undeveloped narrow-minded bank clerk, and would never have achieved any of the success I may have done. College taught me to judge human nature, the most important thing in banking."

It would seem that this gentleman has rather over-estimated the benefits that he has derived from his college education, for inquiry does not show that he has made any remarkable success in his business.

The other banker says: "I unfortunately work in my father's bank, holding a position my education did not especially fit me for. Had I foreseen a business career, I am certain the college education I received could have been combined with other work that would have been of immense advantage to me. A literary and scientific education does not compensate me for the lack of practical knowledge."

In regard to the question whether a college education has been a benefit to him in the performance of his duties, etc., he says: "No and Yes—my general information has helped me, but my lack of special and local knowledge has hurt."

With regard to his probable position had he not gone to college, he says:

"In a country bank thorough knowledge of local conditions and acquaintance with people, with proper

clerical experience, is everything. I would be better off in this respect if I had staid at home."

¶

I particularly requested in my letter to college men that all to whom this inquiry did not apply take the trouble to so inform me, for which purpose a return envelope, stamped and addressed, was enclosed. As so many who did reply seem to have been prompted by a spirit of fraternal feeling and of loyalty toward colleges to go out of their way in order to say a good word for these institutions, I think it is proper to infer that the large number who refrained from answering had been unsuccessful in business and feared that an acknowledgment of this fact would be used to the disadvantage of colleges. Owing to this feeling of loyalty, they would not like to see this done.

If the history of these young men could be learned, I think it would show the deplorable results of college education, and as to the amount of happiness they have received from their college experience, I leave this for the public to imagine.

Should those who favor colleges take exception to these remarks, they are at liberty to follow up this matter and obtain the views of these young men, if possible. If they wish to do this, I will furnish them with the list of names.

¶

A number of long letters have been received from students who have gone into technical or professional lines, some of which show good common-sense views on various phases of this question and naturally would be worthy of introduction in this paper. I

have concluded, however, not to quote from them, as to do so would add considerably to the length of this article, and I believe the public would be better satisfied with information from men having a larger and more practical experience on this subject.

Opinion of Business Men.

¶ *Copy of Letter Sent to One Hundred Business Men.*

The utility of an academic education for young men who have to earn their own living and who expect to pursue a commercial life.

Dear Sir:

I am preparing a paper on the above subject, and as I am desirous of ascertaining what the facts actually show with regard to the value of such education to young men who take up a commercial life, I am sending this letter to a number of the leading and representative men in various lines of business.

Please bear in mind that this inquiry has reference to whether or not this education is a help to the success of such young men from a Commercial Standpoint only.

This subject, which is one of the greatest importance, has been theorized upon too long. I am now endeavoring, in what I believe to be a straight-forward business-like way, to get at its real status, and feel it is due to the young men of this country who contemplate taking a college course that those who have practical ideas about the matter shall assist in its solution by answering these questions with great care.

If any have theories regarding it that they are not acting upon in their own business, there is no objection to their stating them at the close of their

letter, but what I am particularly desirous of obtaining is a reply to my questions.

The persons I am aiming to reach are those who employ the help and have made a study of the subject, and should this letter get into the hands of others, I would request that they refer it to the one in their establishment best qualified to furnish the desired information.

It must be borne in mind that this inquiry does not have reference to the effect of education upon particularly bright boys, but simply the general run of them. Neither is consideration to be given to any regret which some especially successful men may feel because of not having received more education. These matters do not come within the range of this investigation.

Thanking you in advance for your attention to this request, I am *Yours truly,*

R. T. CRANE.

¶ *The Questions Asked.*

1. Have you any college men among your employes.
2. If so, what proportion are they of your entire force of the same class or all classes of help in which such persons would likely be utilized?
3. [*a*] In selecting help, do you give preference to college men?
   [*b*] Or do you avoid them?
4. If you favor such men, is it your experience that they make better help than persons of about the same caliber who have no college education — that is, on account of having received such education?
   [*a*] Do they show greater mental ability?

[*b*] Do they advance more rapidly?

[*c*] Are they generally of better character?

5. [a] If you believe that the mental training which a young man receives in college tends to improve him and make him more valuable to you in your business, have you made it a practice, when seeking employes, of applying to the heads of colleges for information concerning students about to graduate, and selecting help from those whom they might recommend?

[*b*] If not, why?

(6th, 7th, and 8th stricken out.)

9. Do you consider that there is need of more than a grammar school education in a general business life?

10. Will not the work and experience that a young man obtains in any line of business develop the mental qualities required in that business fully as much as would a course in college?

11. Estimating that it costs in the neighborhood of $5,000 to go through college, would you advise a young man, who had only this amount of money, to spend it for a college education?

12. If you favor those who have had a college education, then take the case of two young men of equal age and mental caliber, one of whom (having had simply a grammar school education) starts in business and the other goes to college. At the time the latter leaves college (assuming that the other were then worth $1,200 a year to you), if it were possible to make a twenty-

year contract with each of these young men for his services, how much more would you be willing to pay the college man for the twenty years?

(It should be remembered that the first young man has had about six years' experience in the business at the time the latter leaves college.)

13. Can you give me the names of any business men who are large employers of this class of help, and whose opinion upon this subject would be valuable?

Some of the letters from business men are short and clear cut, and these are given in full. But in others the writers have introduced so many conditions and complications that to quote their letters complete would be very confusing, and in order to avoid this I have given simply a brief synopsis of these replies.

¶ *The Replies and Certain Deductions.*

MR. W. F. MERRILL,

First Vice-President of the New York, New Haven & Hartford R. R. Company, New Haven, Conn.

Mr. Merrill kindly answered the questions and also wrote several long letters, from which I quote the following:

"It has been my experience that men with a college education make better help than men of about the same caliber who have not had that advantage, when they get to a point where their experience warrants putting them into advanced positions, and that it does not take them so long a time to get to a point where they can be safely promoted. A college edu-

cation gives a young man habits of study and application which are invaluable. He learns how to use his brains to better advantage than one who has not had that training. You might just as well say that an apprenticeship is of no value to a man who is going to follow a particular trade as to say, in the case of a man who is going to use his brains, it is not an advantage to him that he should learn how to use them logically by study. Brains are capable of development the same as muscles, and there is nothing that I know of that will develop brains any faster than systematic study. A well trained mind thinks quicker and reaches results more speedily and more accurately. My experience is that educated men show greater mental ability for the reason that I have given above; that they can advance more rapidly, because they learn how to take advantage of the knowledge of others better, and because their education broadens their intellect. It also stimulates ambition and strengthens character. I can not see why the broadening of a man's mind, even along general lines, should not help a person in a business career just as much as a professional one. The training and study of a college education simply lays the foundation upon which a young man, who afterward goes into life, has to build the superstructure, and surely a college education strengthens that foundation to a very great degree. Of course a railroad prefers to employ men who have taken the course laid down in the technical colleges, but an academic course is exceedingly valuable to any young man who has a desire to rise above the average level."

Mr. Merrill goes on to say that he does not think college men have been given an equal chance in large business concerns. I requested him to ascer-

tain the number of college men he had among the station agents on one of the main divisions of his road, to which he replied that they had in the neighborhood of 900 stations, and he was quite sure that none of the station agents were college graduates.

It would seem to me if he were really consistent and in earnest in this matter, he would have employed college men in these positions.

MR. LUCIUS TUTTLE,

President of the Boston & Maine Railroad, Boston, Mass.

Mr. Tuttle does not answer the questions in detail, but writes the following letter:

"We have college men among our employes, but I am unable to tell you what proportion they constitute of our entire force of all classes of help.

"In selecting help, we should give preference to a college-educated man, all other things being equal, and we have no prejudice against them.

"As a general thing, we find college-bred men capable of reaching a higher standard in the service in shorter time than those who lack the mental training that goes with education, *provided*, they are willing to take hold in a subordinate place and work as others are willing to work who have not had their advantages. They, of course, show greater mental ability and advance more rapidly; and so far as we select them they are, I think, generally of better character."

While he apparently favors college men, his statements would have been much more satisfactory had he answered all the questions, and shown what proportion of his men were college bred, and whether

he had really made any practice of employing such men and giving them preference.

MR. GEORGE B. HARRIS,

President of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company, Chicago, Ill.

Mr. Harris made a very full reply to the questions, but misunderstood the particular line of my inquiry, and got a college education mixed up with other lines of education, so that a number of his answers do not apply.

In reply to the question whether he gives preference to college men, he says: "We select those applicants, who, all things considered, appear to be the most desirable."

He is not so sure that college men show greater mental ability, but it is his impression that they are better trained and that they rise more rapidly than persons who have not attended college.

He says they have some college men among their employes, but that he can not give the proportion, as no tally has been kept.

In one of his letters he makes this statement:

"All things being equal, it is obvious that education is beneficial alike to employer and employe. Many men of unusually strong character and ability and little education, realizing their disadvantages, sometimes overcome them by diligence and pass well educated but indolent men in the business race. This may mislead some people. There is no doubt, in my mind, that a good education is desirable and more necessary now than ever before."

MR. JOHN C. WELLING,

Vice-President of the Illinois Central Railroad Company, Chicago, Ill.

My inquiry was first sent to the president of this road, Mr. Stuyvesant Fish, whose answers showed that he was in favor of college graduates, but thinking more detailed information might be obtained from Mr. Welling, a copy of the letter was sent to him, and the following is the substance of his replies:

He thinks that: "If young men are studious, the mental training received in college strengthens them;" that college men "are fitted to fill more important positions, and can frequently be promoted more rapidly than men who have not had like advantages," and that "they are apt to be broader and stronger men and so better men."

In answer to the question whether he gives preference to college men, he says: "In some positions, yes; in most positions, no."

Notwithstanding his rather broad statement in favor of college education, he says the proportion of college men in their employ is very small, and that they do not apply to colleges when in need of help, the reason for this being: "It has never occurred to us to do so; besides, we always have numerous applications from young men fresh from college for positions of one sort or other."

He believes that there is need of more than a grammar school education in general business life, and says that, "the necessity increases as the years go by."

He thinks that as a rule the work and experience a young man obtains in any line of business will not develop the mental qualities required in that business as much as would a course in college.

He "would not advise the average young man" (which, of course, is the sort of person to which this investigation applies) "whose means are limited to $5,000, to spend it all in taking a regular academic course in college."

In reply to my subsequent inquiry as to the number of college men among the station agents on one of the main divisions of his road, he says that out of 199, eight took a partial course in college, and nine took a full college course.

MR. E. P. RIPLEY,

President of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway System, Chicago, Ill.

Mr. Ripley's replies seem to refer mainly to men having a technical education, and for that line of work he favors a college course. He does not answer any of the questions directly, and I have no means of judging whether he is consistent in this matter or not.

With regard to the proportion of college men in their employ, he says: "We have quite a number of college graduates among our 35,000 or more employes, but of course they constitute a very small percentage of the whole."

It seems to me that if he were consistent he would have made a special effort to give more information on this point.

In his letter he says:

"I am of the opinion that college graduates are better equipped for general work, mental caliber and habits being the same, than non-collegiates.

"Their mental processes are more likely to be accurate; they have generally a clearer perception of the fitness of things, and can meet the public and

deal with other men upon rather a better plane than a man who has not been through college.

"Having thus answered your questions as put, let me hasten to say that I am by no means of the opinion that every young man should be sent to college. While, as above stated, I would ordinarily give a college graduate the preference, yet it must be remembered that the four years spent in college, if spent in practical work, may result at the end of that time in giving a *practical* knowledge of a given business, which is better for the purpose of that particular business than a college education, and that *all* young men are not students, and many do not derive much benefit from a college course."

MR. MARVIN HUGHITT,

President of the Chicago & North-Western Railway Company, Chicago, Ill.

Mr. Hughitt says he can not reply with accuracy to my questions, not having the necessary information, and it is evident that this matter is one which has not interested him, nor received his attention.

I quote from his letter as follows:

"The selection of help is made with regard to the applicant's competency for the position.

"I may say generally, however, that it is my conviction that a young man can not get too good an education. Whether it is to the disadvantage of a young man to devote the time necessary in obtaining a collegiate education, in preference to going at once into railroad or other work, depends to a very great degree, if not wholly, upon the 'makeup' of the young man. And in the consideration of the advisability of the one course or the other, this question of the kind of 'timber' a young man may be becomes

a most important factor, in my judgment, in reaching a conclusion, considered both with regard to his school life and to his discharge of the duties pertaining to whatever line of work he may undertake."

MR. E. C. SIMMONS

of the Simmons Hardware Company, St. Louis, Mo.

Mr. Simmons writes at considerable length, and when I say that he expresses himself very strongly on every phase of the question as being in favor of college education for business men, it is stating his position as strongly as if I quoted his entire letter.

I will simply say further that he states that a very small proportion of their force are college men, his reason being: "Comparatively speaking, there are but few people in St. Louis who send their sons to college, and the number applying for places is very limited."

I think he might have given as a further reason the fact that, as mentioned in his letter, he has been of his present opinion with regard to college men for only about three years.

MR. A. C. BARTLETT,

Vice-President of Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Company, Chicago, Ill.

Among his answers to the questions Mr. Bartlett says:

"First, considering what we deem natural qualifications, we give college-bred men the preference.

"We think college discipline a benefit. While they may not show greater mental *ability*, they do show mental *training;* as a consequence they advance more rapidly."

Although his letters seem to indicate that he is

very strongly of the opinion that college education is of value to young men, he apparently has not followed his theory in practice, for he says that they have few college men in their employ, the proportion being very small.

MR. F. C. SMINK,

Vice-President and General Manager of the Reading Iron Company, Reading, Penn.

Mr. Smink does not answer the questions specifically, but writes a long letter from which I quote as follows:

"I am decidedly of the opinion that what Chauncey M. Depew (who has written and expressed his views at more or less length upon this subject) is quoted as saying is absolutely true, to wit: That any young man equipped with a college education increases his chances of making a living and of a more rapid promotion in any line of business, two hundred to three hundred per cent, given that he possesses the requisite amount of industry, energy, and persistent application that characterizes every successful business man.

"We have comparatively few college-bred men employed in the many varied industries under my direction and control, and their proportion to the whole is almost infinitesimal. Yet in all new applications I invariably give preferential hearing to those graduated from some academic or collegiate institution. In the clerical or office field I now make it a rule that none be engaged, even down to the grade of office boy, who shall not at least be possessed of a high school education. * * * *

"One of the difficulties often met with in considering the applications of college graduates, even though they are poor and obliged to earn their own

living, is that so many are unwilling to undergo that apprenticeship or preliminary training in acquiring the details of any service which is so necessary to fit them for higher offices. The drudgery and toil involved, they seem to regard as menial, and generally want to start in on a higher rung of the ladder than their qualifications entitle them to. For this reason I think we are inclined to give preference, in our selections for advancement, to the men who rise from the ranks and who have become familiar with all the degrees and stages of manufacture, or have mastered the details of offices and counting rooms, rather than to the men whose mental attributes, by reason of their higher education, may appear more brilliant and promising.

"Whether these lofty and erroneous ideas are inculcated by present methods of training or the surrounding influences of our educational institutions I shall not attempt to say, but be that as it may, I think it has been clearly established that in all branches of finance, commerce, or manufacture the value of a college education invariably asserts itself."

It will be noticed that he states that the industries with which he is connected have few college men in their employ, the proportion of these men to the whole, as he says, being "almost infinitesimal." This would seem to me to be an indication that he does not carry out his theories in practice.

MR. T. J. HYMAN,

Secretary and Treasurer Illinois Steel Company, Chicago, Ill.

Specific answers are not given by Mr. Hyman, but in his letter he takes the view that the scope of my inquiry is too narrow.

He seems to think that for ordinary lines of business or office work a grammar school education is sufficient, but that for more advanced positions, a college education is essential, and that it would pay a young man to spend the time and money necessary to acquire it.

However, for the class of men referred to in this investigation, he makes the following suggestion:

"In my own judgment, the ideal course for a young man who is dependent upon his own efforts, with the facilities that are now offered for study at home, is for him to engage in his chosen line of business and take up a course of reading or study whereby he can gain technical and practical knowledge at the same time, and at the end of the given period of years he will be worth more to his employers than after the same number of years' study in college."

MR. CYRUS H. McCORMICK,

President of the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company, Chicago, Ill.

Mr. McCormick did not answer the questions in detail, but wrote two or three brief letters, from which I quote the following:

"In general, I may say that we have many college men among our employes, but they would form only a small proportion of those engaged in similar work. In selecting help, we certainly would not avoid college men, but would rather give them the preference, believing that they would make quicker progress and show a better all-around ability than those who had not had the advantages of a college education.

* * * * * * *

"With the same endowment and under the same environment and with the same opportunities, I should expect a college man to win over the man who had not had such advantages."

MR. FRANKLIN MAC VEAGH,
of Franklin Mac Veagh & Co., Chicago, Ill.

In reply to the question whether college men make better help than persons of about the same caliber who have not had a college education, he says that "other things being equal a college education is an advantage."

He thinks college graduates do not show greater mental ability; "only more mental discipline, supposing natural abilities the same," and that they advance more rapidly.

In reply to the question whether he considers that there is need of more than a grammar school education in a general business life, he says: "I do not think you can get too much education in business life."

Notwithstanding the fact that the foregoing answers would indicate that he rather favors a college education, he states that the proportion of college men in their employ is "very small indeed," and that he does not give such men preference when selecting help.

MR. A. ANTISDEL,
General Manager of the American Express Company, Chicago, Ill.

The letter from Mr. Antisdel seems to state his position so clearly that I quote it instead of giving his specific answers to the questions:

"This company employs comparatively few col-

lege men, and for the reason that we employ men of a younger age who have finished their course in common or high schools, and such men who show an aptitude are promoted from time to time, and most of the important positions of this company to-day are held by men who have not had the benefit of a college education, and who have risen from the ranks. While we have but few college men in our service, I believe the employes of the American Express Company are, as a rule, of a very high standard and will compare favorably with men occupying like positions in any other class of business. When we have occasion to take into our service new men of legal age, we should, everything else being equal, give the preference to the college men, for the reason that I believe their minds are better trained, and they acquire a knowledge of the business more rapidly and more comprehensively than men who have not had a college training.

"As to the character and habits of college men, I do not think they are any better than the class of men employed by this company, and the principal reason why I should give preference to college men is that, as before stated, their minds are better trained, and they are able to acquire a knowledge of our business quicker and more comprehensively than men of limited education, and, further, such college men have the capacity to expand and grow with the business and ultimately be qualified for occupying any position in the gift of the company."

In his answers to the questions he states that he does not make a practice of applying to colleges when in need of help, and gives as a reason the fact that until recently he has not given the subject any particular attention.

ARMOUR & COMPANY,

Chicago, Ill.

The party replying does not answer the questions specifically, but has this to say in a general way:

"While not giving especial preference to college men, we feel that such education, when coupled with energy, adaptability in special directions, with other qualifications which always render employes desirable, has a tendency to add greatly to general efficiency. * * * In selections for positions which do not involve expert training, we do not give preference to college men, as such."

It would seem as though there were very few business houses where greater opportunities existed for utilizing college men, if they possess the merits which the writer of this letter seems to think they have. As they have few such men in their employ, it is evident that the importance of hiring of college men has not made a very strong impression upon them.

MR. D. R. KINGSLEY,

Third Vice-President New York Life Insurance Company, New York.

He says he is unable to answer the questions, but writes in a general way as follows:

"College bred men do not enter the company's service through the same avenue and do not begin at the same age, and there is almost no way in which anything like a fair comparison can be instituted between the two.

"We neither discriminate in favor of or against college bred men.

"Of course, amongst the men who enter the company's service as office boys, there are no

college bred men. In the nature of things there could not be. These men make up our greatest source of supply.

"We, however, engage first and last a good many college bred men, and our experience with them, in the particular line of work they are set to do, has been entirely satisfactory."

MR. ROSWELL MILLER,
Chairman of the Board of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul R. R., New York.

Mr. Miller's answers to the questions all show that he is very decidedly of the opinion that a college education is of no value to a man in a business life.

In closing he makes this remark:

"I spent one year in college, and I consider it fortunate that it was not more."

MILTON H. SMITH,
President of the Louisville & Nashville R. R. Company, Louisville.

Mr. Smith writes as follows:

"I am not in a position to reply to the questions propounded, for the reason that this company fills all positions in the service by promotion of employes; only their fitness for the position in view being taken into account."

MR. H. B. LEDYARD,
President of the Michigan Central Railroad Company, Detroit, Mich.

The writer does not answer the questions, but his letter indicates that he favors college men. He puts special stress, however, upon the scientific course, and does not give his views regarding an academic education.

A. S. WEINSHEIMER,

Secretary of The Pullman Company, Chicago.

In reply, Mr. Weinsheimer said: "While we would be glad to be of service to you in this direction, we have never gathered any data in relation to our employes of the character which you mention, and I regret, therefore, that it would not be practicable for us to furnish you any information in the line of your investigation."

MR. JAMES B. FORGAN,

President of the First National Bank, Chicago.

Mr. Forgan takes the ground that: "More depends on the man than his early education. A man's schooling is after all the smallest part of his education," and it seems to be his rule to look to the man rather than to his education.

He has taken considerable pains to ascertain the proportion of college men in his bank, and finds that it is from three and one-half to five and one-half per cent.

He says that they do not give preference to nor do they avoid college men; that they do not find that such men show greater mental ability or advance more rapidly than persons of about the same caliber who have not received a college education.

While his answer to the question "will not the work and experience a young man obtains in any line of business develop the mental qualities required in that business fully as much as would a course in college," is in the affirmative, and while he also says that he would not advise a young man who had only $5,000 to spend it for a college education, if he intended to enter upon a business career, he still

thinks that there is need of more than a grammar school education in a general business life.

EDWARD TOWNSEND,
Cashier Importers' & Traders' National Bank, New York.

I quote from his letter as follows:

"Of our entire force of over one hundred clerks, we think we have but two college graduates, and they passed through one of the smaller colleges many years ago, and finished the course at a very early age.

"Our method, when we need to increase our force, has been for many years to take in boys just from school, of about sixteen years of age, without any previous business experience and train them in our own methods, promoting them from time to time as the opportunity presents itself. This plan has worked very satisfactorily with us. We have found that the best material for our purpose has come from the middle class, young men who have to work to make a living. Other things being equal, we of course, in selecting young men, take into consideration the education they have received, but at the age they enter our employ, they are usually too young to have completed a college course."

MR. A. H. WIGGIN,
Vice-President of the National Park Bank, New York.

He says they have no college men in their employ.

MR. W. H. LINCOLN,
President of the Chamber of Commerce, Boston.

The writer states that he has no college men among his employes; that he prefers to take younger men.

In reply to the question: "Will not the work and experience that a young man obtains in any line of business develop the mental qualities required in that business fully as much as would a course in college?" He says: "Yes—especially experience. If a young man is ambitious, he will cultivate his mind in various ways."

MR. FRANK E. PEABODY,
of Kidder, Peabody & Company, Boston.

Mr. Peabody says he is unable to answer the questions in detail, but writes a letter from which we quote as follows:

"We have had quite a number of college men among our clerks; the number at present is, I think, eleven out of sixty-eight.

"Our general experience with them has been that they have either proved exceptionally efficient, or else, finding themselves unlikely to rise rapidly, have left us voluntarily. * * * Most of the college men at present in our force have been with us but a few years."

MR. F. H. PEABODY,
of Kidder, Peabody & Co., Boston.

Mr. Frank E. Peabody had his father also write his views on the subject, which are as follows:

"The chance of getting himself successfully established in business, seems to me better for a young man who goes into a business establishment on graduating from school, say at the age of seventeen or eighteen, than that of a man who spends the four years from seventeen to twenty-one in college, and the chances of being efficient up to a certain point, seem to me better than those of the college

student. Coming to a higher grade of work, the chances seem to me about equal.

"Probably the management of our railroads illustrate as high a grade as any of business and executive ability, and the greatest managers of railroads in this country are men who, I believe, never had any college education. Edgar Thomson, President Roberts, Cornelius Vanderbilt, James F. Joy, C. P. Huntington, Mr. Plant, and James J. Hill are instances, and Mr. Schwab, of the Steel Trust, I believe to be another in a different line.

"But, if a man has the qualities which carry him up to the top in business, the college education seems to me likely to give him a line of valuable acquaintances, more tact in dealing with his fellow men, and more capacity for enjoying the intellectual part of life, than if he had grown up without it."

MR. PERCY STRAUS,

with R. H. Macy & Company, New York.

The writer states that they have very few college men among their employes, but does not give the proportion.

In reply to the question whether they give preference to college men when selecting help, he says: "We have in certain instances."

He states that he thinks that college men show greater mental ability and advance more rapidly than persons of about the same caliber who have not attended college. He replies in the negative to the question, whether the work and experience that a young man receives in any line of business will develop the mental qualities required in that business as much as would a course in college. In the face of this he says he does not consider that there is

need of more than a grammar school education in a general business life, and that he would not advise a young man who had only $5,000 to spend it for a college education.

MR. F. N. BREWER,
Manager, John Wanamaker, Philadelphia.

"We are not able to give exact information covering our entire force, but in certain departments, including those in which retail selling of goods is done, the Counting Room, Customers' Accounts, Auditing and Mail Order, in which a total of 542 men are at present employed, twenty-six are found to have passed through a full or partial college course. The other departments, such as Delivery, Packing Rooms, etc., would naturally show a smaller proportion of college men.

"The third question (A. and B.) does not consciously enter into the consideration of employments. No doubt the fact of a college course would lead us to expect greater intelligence and thus weigh in favor of an applicant, but this is not a question which is at all habitually considered.

"As you would judge from the reply to question three, we are hardly able to reply to question four, the difference, if any, between college men and others not having been sufficiently marked in our experience to have impressed us."

MR. G. E. ARMSTRONG,
Secretary of the H. B. Claflin Company, New York City.

"Replying to your letter of the 3d inst., we do not keep a record of our employes as to whether they are college graduates or not. Furthermore, we have no

time to go into the details and answer the numerous inquiries which you make of us."

MR. ANDREW B. COBB,
of Stanton, Converse & Company, Boston.

Mr. Cobb says that they have no college men in their employ, and that they prefer high-school boys. He thinks that: "As a rule, men out of college are no better fitted for business life, if as well, as boys from school, and they have to lose the four years of business training at a time when boys absorb rules and ideas very rapidly. Boys are more susceptible to training than college men."

MR. R. M. FAIR,
Manager, Marshall Field & Company (Wholesale), Chicago, Ill.

Mr. Fair's answers to the questions all show that he is not a believer in college men.

He states that the proportion of college men in their employ is five per cent.

MR. JOHN V. FARWELL, JR.,
Treasurer of the John V. Farwell Company, Chicago, Ill.

Mr. Farwell says that: "College men are apt to make a better impression with the better class of merchants whom they have as customers, while perhaps not as good with the average country merchant."

He thinks "they show greater ability in deciding questions and in making sales and purchases, and on that account are likely to advance more rapidly."

He does not, however, appear to be very enthusi-

astic on the subject, for in reply to the question, whether the work and experience which a young man obtains in any line of business will develop the mental qualities required in that business fully as much as would a course in college, he says: "As a rule it will, considering the business qualities alone."

He also states that their experience has been that the graduates of country high schools, with a year or two of experience in the retail dry goods business, make the best all-around men for them.

Replying to the question whether he would recommend a young man with only $5,000 to spend it for a college education he says: "On the basis of a money making success we do not believe we would so advise."

Their proportion of college men, he says, is about five per cent.

MR. W. C. THORNE,

General Manager of Montgomery Ward & Company, Chicago.

Mr. Thorne says that the proportion of college men in their employ is about ten per cent. That persons having a college education show greater mental ability and advance more rapidly than those of about the same caliber who have not attended college. He does not, however, give preference to college men; in fact, he avoids them, except in the few cases where he finds they are willing to begin at the bottom of the ladder and work their way up.

MR. ALBERT A. SPRAGUE,

President of Sprague, Warner & Company, Chicago.

Mr. Sprague does not answer the questions in full, but has this to say:

"I think the college education is neither a drawback nor an advantage in a commercial life, except in the greater resources it gives a man.

"A man's success depends more upon himself than on his education."

He thinks that the college men who go into commercial life usually show greater mental ability than men without such education, and that "if they have the perseverance they advance more rapidly."

He says that in selecting help he does not give preference to college men, nor does he avoid them; that the proportion of college men in their employ is small.

MR. J. J. DAU,

Vice-President of Reid, Murdock & Company, Chicago, Ill.

Instead of answering the specific questions, Mr. Dau writes the following letter:

"Referring to your recent inquiry upon the subject of university or higher education, we beg to say that, perhaps singularly enough, there has never been a college graduate at work in our forces. As far as expedient, we begin with boys at the age of sixteen and train them gradually to the field for which they show most efficiency. When employing a person later in life, it is naturally for certain duties in which he must have acquired training and experience elsewhere; but even then, and with all due respect, we obtain better results three times out of four from a man who has gained his knowledge in our own house. For a young man of more than average ability, we are in favor of the best education and plenty of it, but as you go down the scale the situation alters, and sometimes, as the saying is, "a good shoemaker is spoiled to make a poor preacher."

AMERICAN SUGAR REFINING COMPANY,
New York.

In reply they state that they have no college men in their employ, so can not answer the questions.

M. B. WALLACE,
Secretary of Samuel Cupples Wooden Ware Company, St. Louis, Mo.

Instead of quoting Mr. Wallace's answers to the various questions, I give a copy of the letter received from him, as this seems to express his views more clearly.

"Your circular letter of September 5th has been received, and I take pleasure in answering your inquiries on the subject of education of young men, and in further explaining my views on this subject will say that the greatest difficulty I have had in employing college men has been that, while they say when they want employment that they are anxious to get down at the bottom of the ladder and work their way up, still if they do not find themselves advanced more rapidly than is consistent with either good business or fairness to the other employes, who are in all probability just as capable as they are, they become dissatisfied, and do not think they are getting along fast enough.

"The mistake most of them make is that they have an idea they are smarter and are above the average class of employes, which immediately places them at a disadvantage, as the feeling of course is promptly resented by the other employes, and, in whatever way they can, they make it harder for the college man to get along.

"As a general proposition, I would prefer not to have a college man, unless I was satisfied that it was

necessary for him to work and that he would not become dissatisfied too soon and want to change because he was not getting along fast enough.

"Your twelfth inquiry is one that is, to my mind, very hard to answer, and I do not believe that I or anybody else could even make a fair guess at which would be the more valuable man of the two at the end of twenty years. My impression, however, is that if the young man was doing his work in a thoroughly satisfactory manner, I would prefer him rather than to take the risk on the latter.

"In summing up the whole situation, the college man, to my mind, is only a desirable employe when he is, as a few college men are, conscientious, hard working, and willing to get down at the bottom and stay there for a sufficient length of time to work his way up."

He gives their proportion of college men as about five per cent.

MR. S. NORVELL,

President of Norvell-Shapleigh Hardware Company, St. Louis, Mo.

The writer says he does not give college men preference, nor does he avoid them, and that the proportion of such men in their employ is not over five per cent. He thinks they do not show greater mental ability, and that they do not advance more rapidly.

As to whether there is need of more than a grammar school education in a general business life, he says:

"Yes, if a man reaches the higher grade positions — No, if he does not."

Answering the question, will the work and experience that a young man obtains in any line of business

develop the mental qualities required in that business fully as much as would a course in college, he says:

"Yes, but the development will be narrow, not broad. A man educated altogether in a business life, as a general thing, is more narrow in his views than a college-bred man."

He would not advise a young man with only $5,000 to spend it for a college education, if he intended to enter business.

His answer to the last question is to the effect that he would not, as a general rule, favor the college man, but he thinks that, in a few cases, a man with a college education would be worth twenty-five per cent more to him than a man without such education.

In addition to his answers to the questions, he makes the following general remarks:

"It may not be out of place to say, in concluding, that my observation of the work of college men has been that they lack concentration — they do not know how to economize time. They are not willing to sacrifice present comforts and convenience for the possibility of future gain. At college they do not seem to teach either the value of time or how it may be saved. After several years of leisure and the independence of a college life, a young man who enters one of our large modern business houses finds himself sadly out of place and out of touch with his surroundings.

"It seems to me that it is a very natural result of the habits formed in college that so many college men find life on western ranches, in mines, or in outdoor work generally more to their liking than the confinement and restrictions of a business house.

* * * * * * * * *

"My experience in business with college men has

not been in their favor. If I decide to have my son follow a business career, I will not send him to college."

MR. E. S. CONWAY,

Secretary of the W. W. Kimball Company, Chicago.

Mr. Conway states that the proportion of college men in their employ is four per cent; that he does not give preference to nor does he avoid college men, and that his experience has been that the college graduate does not, as a rule, show greater mental ability, but he thinks he should.

In reply to the question whether he thinks there is need of more than a grammar school education in a general business life, he says: "We are sure that all else being equal, a college education should be an advantage to a young man entering business life."

He closes his letter with the following remarks:

"If all young men who desire a college education, and are able to attain it, returning from college at twenty-two or twenty-three, with their feet flat on the ground, and a willingness on their part to begin at the bottom, working in the primary school of business with boys of fifteen or sixteen years of age, and never refer to the fact that they are college bred, but are content with the consciousness that they have a good foundation and apply their energies to their business undertaking, such college graduates will stand a good chance before middle life of passing the boy who began his business life five or six years earlier, but without the college education.

"In making the above statement, I wish to emphasize the fact that my own experience as to college men in business has been limited, for the reason that

the majority begin with us at sixteen or seventeen and work up, or out. If the college man, with a literary education only, goes into business, he comes into competition with young men who have been learning business details for five or six years, which is a heavy handicap, and can only be overcome, if at all, by superior application, which is quite as likely to be developed by the boy who went out to work at sixteen.

"Considering education in a broad way as training not confined to colleges or class rooms, it is evident that the successful business man must have education, whether he acquire it at college or digs it out; but I believe that the qualities on which the successful business man depends — staying power, grasp, accurate knowledge of values, and ability to execute — are not products of the class room as distinguished from the shop and the office."

MR. HENRY W. CRAMP,

Vice-President of the William Cramp & Sons Ship & Engine Building Company, Philadelphia.

"Without taking up seriatim your questions as to the employment here of college men, or men who have not enjoyed a collegiate education, we will say, generally, that such questions cut no figure whatever with us in selecting a man for any position in our employ. We employ men solely with reference to their capacity for the work which we desire them to do, and it is entirely immaterial to us how, when, or where, or by what kind of process they acquired the education and training that may fit them for their duties."

MR. WILLIAM SELLERS,

President of William Sellers Company, Incorporated, Philadelphia.

Mr. Sellers states that he has a few college men in his employ, the proportion being about three-quarters of one per cent.

His answers to the other questions are so coupled with conditions that I do not quote them, as they would throw no light on the subject.

MR. EDWIN REYNOLDS,

with Allis-Chalmers Company, Milwaukee.

While he apparently favors college education, Mr. Reynolds has replied to only a few of the questions, and these answers are so coupled with conditions that it is impossible to find any clear-cut expressions to quote.

He states that the proportion of college men in their employ would probably be not over five per cent, and his letter does not indicate that he makes any pretense of hiring such men, or that he has given the subject special consideration.

MR. L. A. CARTON,

Treasurer Swift & Company, Chicago.

The views expressed by Mr. Carton on this subject are not exactly clear, and it seems evident from his letters that he has given it but little thought, and has not had sufficient experience with college men to enable him to form any judgment.

He says the proportion of college men working for them is less than one per cent, and makes the remark that he does not believe their business is attractive to men who have had advanced educa-

tional facilities, but I can not see why the work in their office should differ materially from office work in any other line of business.

¶ *Certain Deductions.*

Perhaps the most noticeable feature in these letters from business men is the inconsistency shown by nearly all who have expressed themselves as favoring college education. Many of them make the statement that there is need of more than a common school education in a commercial life, and that there is something about the mental training and mental discipline which a young man receives at college that is of great value to him in business, enabling him to grasp questions and reason out matters more readily than one who has not attended college.

It will be observed, however, that, with two or three exceptions, none of these gentlemen appears to make a point of employing such men in his business.

In this connection, I wish to call especial attention to the letters from Mr. Merrill and Mr. Welling.

If college men possess the qualifications which these gentlemen claim for them, is it not strange that the great corporations with which they are connected have not employed college men more extensively, for they have much greater opportunities to utilize such men than any other class of employers?

The only business men, aside from the two just mentioned, who appear to be particularly enthusiastic advocates of college education are Mr. Simmons and Mr. Antisdel, and their position is greatly weakened by the fact that they have been of their present opinion on this subject for only a very few years, and have but a small proportion of college men in their

employ, which would seem to indicate that the great success they have met with in their business has been gained without the assistance of college men. I think it is exceedingly questionable whether, under these circumstances, they are justified in making such broad claims as they do for college education.

In addition to the gentlemen just mentioned, there are quite a number who appear to have stretched their consciences a little in order to say a good word for college education, for the opinions which they express are not in accord with their practice in business.

I have no doubt that their remarks have been intended as a kindness to college people, but it seems to me that they have taken the wrong course, and that they would have treated the colleges, and especially the young men who contemplate attending such institutions, with greater kindness had they, instead of attempting to conceal the truth, come out in a perfectly frank way and stated the cold facts in the case.

The truth of the matter is that, when it comes to considering an applicant for a position, few of these gentlemen will be found to pay any attention to the amount of knowledge he may have of Greek, Latin, literature, etc., or care a straw about the mental drill and discipline or the well rounded character that he may have acquired through a course at college.

What they are particularly interested in knowing is whether he understands their business and can promote it. This is all that has any weight with them in the selection of help.

I regard the letter from Mr. Townsend as being the most businesslike of all the replies received, and believe it will be found that the method which he

says is followed in his bank is the custom of practically all business men—that is, that they take boys about sixteen years of age who have attended the lower schools and then train such help in their own methods, advancing them as they prove worthy and the business requires.

Not only is this the most economical way, but Civil Service Reform and fair play demand that young men who show themselves worthy and capable should be promoted.

Every young man ought to realize that if he is to receive advancement, he must make himself worthy of it, and, when he proves himself deserving, it is an injustice to deprive him of promotion by bringing in outside help such as college graduates. Besides, if outsiders are hired for such advanced positions, the chances are that, three times out of four, a mistake will be made, and the experiment will result in a waste of time and money. On the other hand, an employer is in little danger of making an error when he promotes young men who have been educated in his establishment, for he has had plenty of opportunity to acquaint himself with their characters and capabilities.

I have no doubt there is a great deal of truth in the remark of some of the students quoted elsewhere, that upon applying for employment after leaving college they found considerable prejudice among business men against college graduates.

Such young men, having no business experience, must of necessity start at the bottom, and an employer does not like to humiliate them in this way, after they have spent their time and money in obtaining a college education. He can not help feeling that they consider themselves superior to the

ordinary run of young men, and that if they apply themselves properly they will expect to be advanced more rapidly than those who have not had a college education, and to a greater extent than their abilities entitle them, which would, of course, deprive others of their natural rights.

On the other hand, the employer does not experience this anxiety concerning poor boys in his employ who did not receive such education, for he knows that if they do not obtain rapid promotion, they are more likely to be contented and not feel that they have been treated unjustly.

¶ *Importance of Starting Out Right in Life.*

The years which a young man spends in college are decidedly the most important and valuable in his life. It is during this period that he usually lays the foundation for his life's work, and not the slightest doubt should be allowed to exist regarding the utility of the occupation to which he devotes this time, for when he arrives at the age of manhood, it is expected that he will be at least self-supporting and prepared to assume the responsibilities of manhood.

Many young men receive an erroneous impression regarding the value of a college education, and think, as the president of a western college once remarked in his address to a graduating class, that upon leaving college they can go out and pick up gold bricks in the street. It is only after they have spent their valuable time in college and have started out to earn a living that they find their higher education is practically of no advantage to them; that they must commence at the foot of the ladder, which

they could just as well have done five or six years before, and in that event would now be earning a reasonable salary.

In other words, not until then do they learn the truth of this college president's further remark that the bricks referred to are fastened down very tight. I think they will also discover that instead of their college education making them especially skillful in loosening these bricks, it really has the opposite effect, and that they are less able to accomplish this task than the man who did not go to college.

Are not the heads of these institutions treating boys unjustly when they allow them to go through college under this misapprehension and fail to enlighten them upon this subject until they have spent their time and money and are about to go out into the world?

¶ *Cost of a College Education.*

The answers from college presidents to the question regarding cost of educating a student have been omitted, because several have given no information at all upon this point, and I think those who attempted to do so have been mistaken in their figures—in fact, I doubt whether college people are capable of even approximating this information.

For the purpose of my article this question should be considered in a strictly business-like way, and the figures should cover what the full cost would be if colleges were not endowed or exempt from taxation. This I think can be approximated very closely from the rates charged in preparatory schools, for, as these institutions are not endowed, they of course have to be conducted strictly upon their merits.

In such schools the tuition is about $150 for the

first year and $300 a year for the next two years, or $450 for the course.

On this basis I estimate that the college course would cost about $400 a year, or $1,600 for the four years.

To this must be added the amount which the student would probably have earned had he spent this time in some business occupation, which I estimate at an average of $500 a year, or $3,500 for the seven years.

Then as the college boy for about four years after his graduation would have less earning capacity than the young man who started in business at the time he finished grammar school, we must also add this difference, which I estimate at about $500 per year, or $2,000 for the four years.

This makes the total cost of educating a young man, from the time he leaves grammar school until he graduates, about $7,550. When this sum is multiplied by the number of students turned out by all the colleges each year, it will be seen what an enormous expenditure this is.

¶ *Successful Business Men.*

In one of the letters from business men attention is called to an article by John W. Leonard, entitled, "College Education and Success," in which reference is made to some statistics in the book, "Who's Who in America," showing the number of successful men in this country who have had a college education.

This book is also referred to in a letter received from President McLean of the University of Iowa.

I have no means of judging as to the correctness of those statistics or how successful such men have

been in business, as there are all degrees of success; but will say this, that probably not more than two or three of the pioneer business men in Chicago, who have made a marked success in business, ever attended college, and the remainder did not, as a rule, receive even a grammar school education.

The great majority of our strongest and most successful men in the country to-day came from farms and villages and obtained very little education.

Many claim that, as a rule, men without a college education who have made a success in business would have been more successful had they received such education or, at least, that by reason of their strong character, the time spent in college would not have materially detracted from their subsequent usefulness in commercial life, but with this view I can not fully agree.

In my opinion, few of them would have been anywhere near so successful in business had they gone to college, for their success was largely due to the fact, which was impressed upon them in the early part of their career, that they would have to struggle if they expected to succeed.

In letters received from students, one of them says: "I believe the average college student learns to be a loafer and money-spender rather than a money-saver and energetic citizen," and I think he might have added that a course in college has a tendency to make a young man conceited and impractical and creates in him something of a contempt for labor and for those who have not a college education.

I feel quite sure that if the men who have been successful in business were asked whether they regretted starting in business at the time they did, in

place of going to college and taking the chances of afterward being able to gain the success which they have achieved, all would answer in the negative.

No doubt many successful men wish they had received a better education, for some of them are not sufficiently educated to be able to compose a letter correctly or express themselves clearly and properly in business matters, and have not acquired a taste for literature and many other things that contribute to one's happiness, but I contend that a grammar school education would have been sufficient to place these gentlemen in the position they desire.

I think it can be safely said that the great men at the head of our railroads are the strongest business men the world has ever produced, and so far as I have been able to ascertain, not one of them is a consistent believer in college education.

Certainly none of them have expressed in their letters any regret on account of not having received such education themselves.

On the contrary, Mr. Roswell Miller remarks that he spent one year in college, and considers it fortunate that he did not spend more.

¶ *Object of Education.*

The remark was once made by President Eliot of Harvard that the object of education is to make people happy, and I presume that this is its fundamental purpose.

I do not imagine, however, that he meant by this that education or happiness applies simply to the man who is well educated in literature or languages or in the lines which are ordinarily understood to give polish and enable one to be an ornament to

society, but that he referred in a broader sense to those persons who are educated in such branches as the arts, sciences, history, mathematics, physics, study of microbes, biology, chemistry, etc.

Whether he would go still farther and include men who have had somewhat less book education and more of the combined education of head and hand, I am not sure, but if so, this would include such lines as agriculture, mechanics, and mercantile pursuits.

I do not suppose he would take the ground that there is no happiness in this world except that which grows out of the ordinary college education, but would grant that it may be enjoyed by anyone who has marked knowledge, and that it makes little difference what branches his knowledge covers.

For illustration, take such men as Westinghouse, Edison, Cramp, Scott, and hundreds of others that might be mentioned. I contend that the happiness which the most learned college man gets out of life does not compare with that obtained by these men from their business.

The great question which everyone has to decide is what class of education is going to yield him the most pleasure, and if he can, in addition to having a pleasant occupation, accumulate money at the same time, he has a better chance for enjoyment than one who takes up a line of education which returns him little or no profit.

The greatest pleasure a man can have is that which arises from the feeling that he has been a success in a creditable occupation.

On the contrary, the greatest unhappiness comes from the knowledge that one's life has been a failure, and it seems to me that the more a man has of ordi-

nary education, the more severely will he feel this failure.

Many educated men have, by their associations, acquired tastes beyond their means, which tends to make them unhappy.

No doubt men of strong character who are not obliged to go to work early in life to earn a living, will enjoy life more if they take a college course. It gives them a standing and position in society which affords them considerable pleasure, but, of course, this does not concern the public.

At the same time, I think it is doubtful whether this class of men get more enjoyment out of life than those who have built up a successful business, yet who received only a moderate education.

It is my opinion that a man with a college education, and a reasonably good income, will probably get as much enjoyment out of life as one who has a considerably greater income but is without such education; also, that an uneducated man with a good reliable income will be happier than one who has received an education but possesses a meager income.

To claim that a man can be happy simply because he has a taste for literature is taking a very narrow view of the subject. He certainly has been of no benefit to mankind, and there is no reason why he ought to be happy—in fact, just the contrary should be the case. The only men entitled to happiness in this world are those who are useful.

Many of the college graduates refer in their letters to the happiness which they have gained from their college training and experience, but I can not understand what particular reason they have for being happy.

If, as will be seen later in this article, they forget, as a general thing, a great part of what is taught them at college, their happiness can not be due to the knowledge gained there; hence, it would seem as though it must come simply from the false pride which they feel in having attended some prominent institution of this kind.

Surely the large number of students who did not reply to my inquiry for the reason, as I have claimed in another portion of this paper, that they have been unsuccessful since leaving college, can not have gained much happiness from their college experience. Instead of adding to their pleasure and enjoyment in life, I think, there is no doubt, that it has had just the opposite effect.

In letters called forth by this investigation much has been said in regard to money not being the whole thing, and no doubt there is considerable truth in this statement; many people become avaricious and unscrupulous in their desire to obtain wealth, and succeed in acquiring altogether too much of it. At the same time nothing is gained in a matter of this kind by putting it in a false position. If not the whole thing, I think it is safe to say that money is probably seventy-five per cent of the whole thing. The fact is, that as a rule, it is looked upon with contempt only by those who have not got it and do not know how to obtain it.

¶ *When is a Man Educated?*

One of the college graduates remarks that he has forgotten nearly everything that he learned at college, and that all the benefit he received there was the mental drill. I have frequently heard other college graduates express themselves in the same

manner, that is, that they remembered very little that they learned in college. If this be true, the question naturally arises, how can such persons be considered educated? I should think that they might more appropriately be classed with the uneducated.

Even if a man has attended one of the best institutions of learning in the country and has retained all the knowledge that was taught him there, I contend that, so far as being educated is concerned, he is not to be compared with one who, though not having received a college education, is an extensive traveler, reader, and observer, and has from his association with different people acquired a large amount of general information that is useful to himself or to the public.

The whole world is a college, and one who wishes to obtain knowledge will find plenty of opportunities for doing so.

A young man is quite as likely in business, as in college, to be brought in contact with people and questions which compel him to exercise his reasoning powers, and the mental training thus received will in all probability be as valuable to him as that which he would have obtained in college; at the same time, he is acquiring a knowledge of the business which places him decidedly ahead of the college graduate.

The young business man is in a position to realize much more fully than the man in college possibly can, the importance of informing himself along the particular lines which will be beneficial to him in his occupation. If he wishes at any time to acquire knowledge, either for this purpose or to enable him to enjoy life better, he will find plenty of opportunities for doing so outside of college, for teachers

can not supply any information that is not already contained in books.

¶

Probably the strongest argument in favor of colleges is the fact that, as a rule, the most successful business men in the country send their sons there. But whether they do so with the expectation that the boys will thereby become better business men or because of the feeling that it will enable them to become more valuable members of society and get more enjoyment out of life, is a question.

As such young men do not have to make the struggle which their fathers did to establish a business, possibly they can afford to indulge in this luxury, but so far as its benefiting them in a commercial way is concerned, I claim that the general results of education will apply to this class of young men as well as to others who go to college.

We find large numbers of college graduates to-day who have come into a thoroughly established and successful business that their fathers had built up, and it remains to be seen how they will turn out.

The fact that a great many of our prominent business men support colleges is probably looked upon as another argument in favor of such institutions. No doubt some of my letters of inquiry have been addressed to this class of men, but so far as I am aware no letters have been received from them, and no one who has written has made any mention of this point. We have, therefore, no explanation from such men as to whether they contribute to colleges because a thorough investigation has convinced them of the importance of these institutions or because it is simply a fad with them.

I know of nothing that people go into so blindly as educational enterprises. Many who show excellent judgment in other matters exhibit an incredible lack of it when anything of this nature is presented to them. They take the greatest pains to inquire into the work of other public institutions which they are asked to support, but no matter what sort of an educational scheme is brought to them, they seem to take it for granted that it possesses merit, and are ready to aid it without question.

When a person of high standing contributes to the support of such enterprises, it is evidence that he endorses them. In so doing, he assumes great responsibility, and therefore it is of the greatest importance that he satisfy himself beyond doubt that he is making no mistake.

¶

A number of colleges have recently changed their academic courses so as to include certain commercial studies. This would indicate that their previous high and lofty theory that a college education should be in the direction of elevating students into an atmosphere not contaminated by commercialism has been exploded, and that they have now come to the conclusion that the development of a man's mental faculties can be accomplished by learning something useful.

If this be true, what then becomes of the position taken by those who have claimed so much for the old non-commercial course of education in the way of making grander and broader-minded men? It seems to me that this change is an exceedingly radical one, and that these people must now determine, not only whether they were wrong before, but